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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Beshear Announces Plan to Open Southeast State Correctional Complex

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 28, 2020) – Gov. Andy Beshear and the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet today announced plans for the Department of Corrections to open and operate Southeast State Correctional Complex.

“The 656-bed prison is located in Wheelwright, and its opening will reduce the number of state inmates in county jails,” said Gov. Beshear. “The state commits to safely and effectively running this state prison, while being able to bring new job opportunities to Floyd County and its surrounding counties.”

Kentucky’s legislature passed a one-year state budget in April that specifically allocated funds for the state to open and operate Southeast State Correctional Complex in this fiscal year.

The Department of Corrections (DOC) will lease the building from CoreCivic, but it will operate the facility as a state prison. The hiring process will begin immediately with those who previously applied for positions at the facility. The prison will eventually employ over 200 staff. DOC will evaluate seasoned correctional staff who wish to voluntarily transfer to the new facility. Inmates will be transferred to the prison as soon as staff training is completed over the summer.

"The Cabinet along with the Department of Corrections' commitment to hold offenders to the highest standards of personal accountability and responsibility will remain unchanged as we open and operate this facility in Floyd County," said Justice and Public Safety Cabinet Secretary Mary Noble. "Proactive measures taken at the other state prisons to aid in the fight against the novel coronavirus will be enforced at this prison beginning day one. We will continue to monitor the situation and respond with necessary action in order to protect correctional officers, staff and individuals placed in our custody."

Precautions will be taken in consultation with Department for Public Health to reduce the risk of the coronavirus entering the prison. The additional initiatives enforced at all DOC facilities to mitigate the spread of the virus will be implemented at this facility as well.

Southeast State Correctional Complex will house secure custody male inmates. Inmates who are statutorily required to serve their sentence in a county jail will not be moved.

"Southeast State Correctional Complex will be a state prison in every sense other than ownership and upkeep of the facility," said Corrections Commissioner Cookie Crews. "It will mirror our other state prisons and we will be able to offer programming and educational opportunities for this population. We will provide a substance abuse program, other evidence-based programs, and vocational programs such as carpentry."

The prison was built in 1993 and last held inmates in 2012. Since then, a facility and maintenance crew has maintained the 111 acres of property and 141,000 square-foot building. The facility includes a combination of cells and multiple-occupancy housing units along with a medical unit, administrative offices, and space for recreation, education and training programs.

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